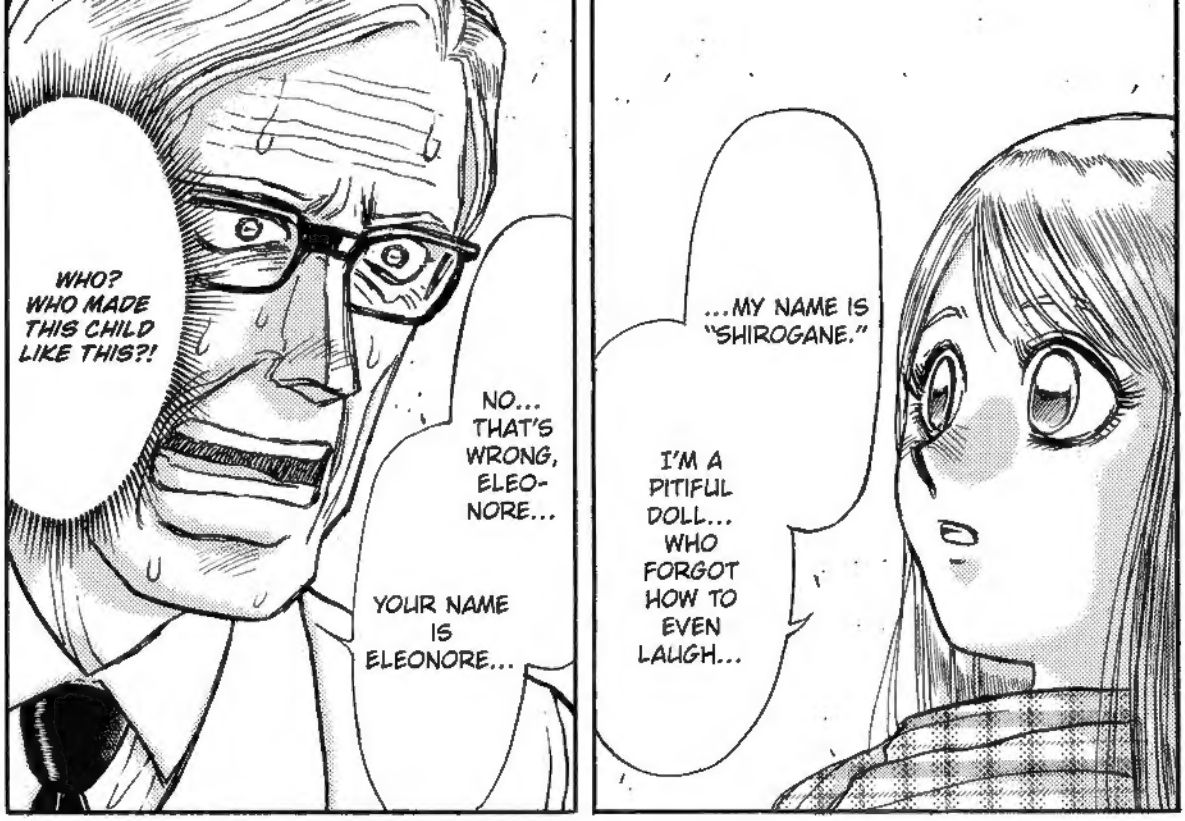
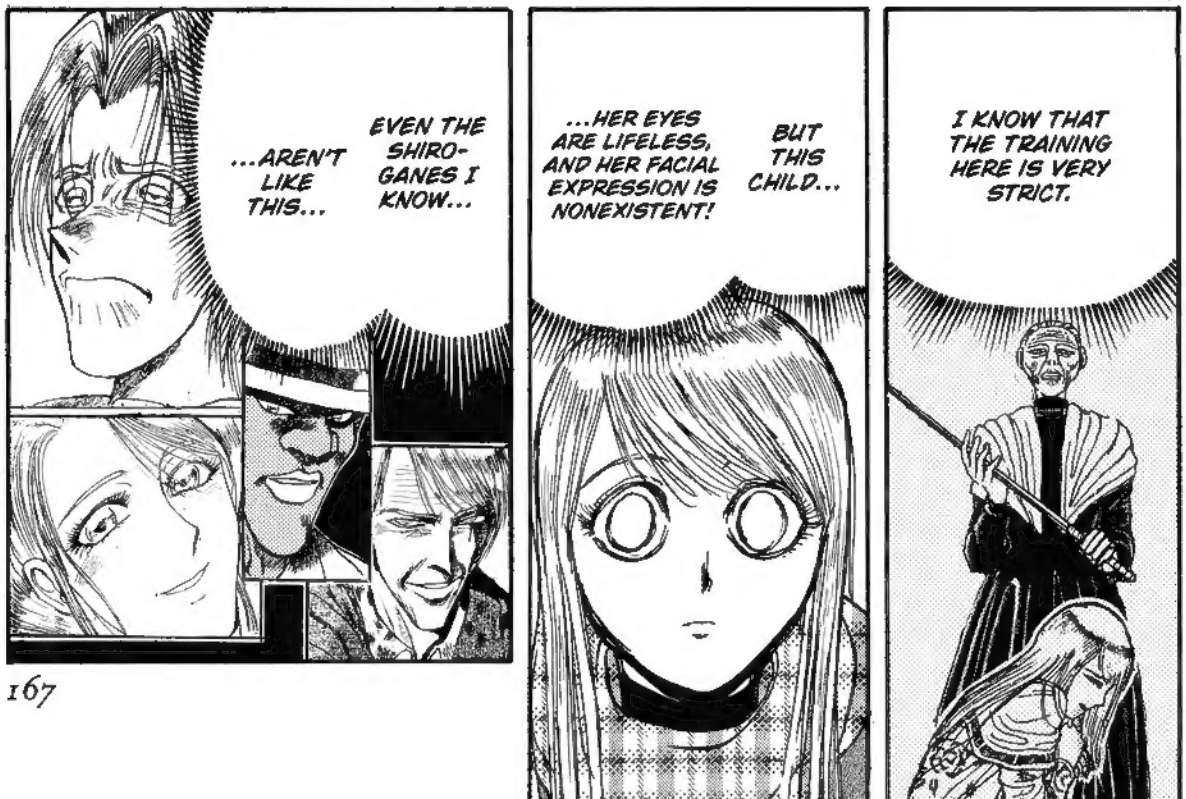
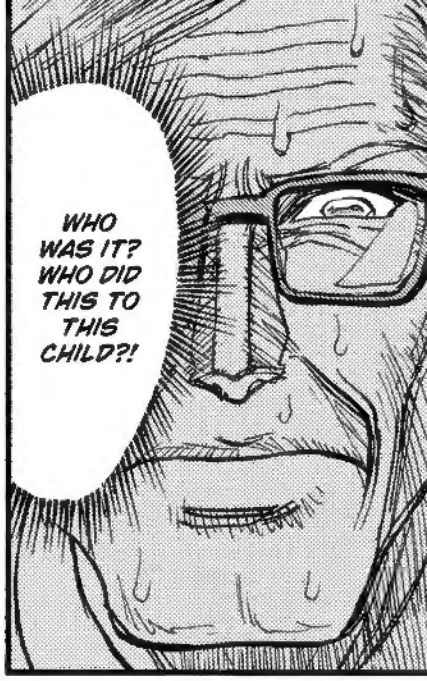

WHO? WHO MADE THIS CHILD LIKE THIS?!
NO... THAT'S WRONG, ELEO-NORE...
YOUR NAME IS ELEONORE...
...MY NAME IS "SHIROGANE."
I'M A PITIFUL DOLL... WHO FORGOT HOW TO EVEN LAUGH...

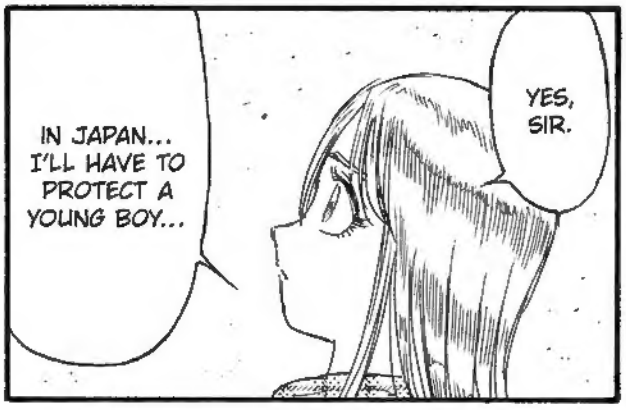
ACT 39 - THE IDENTITY OF THE SHADOW

1

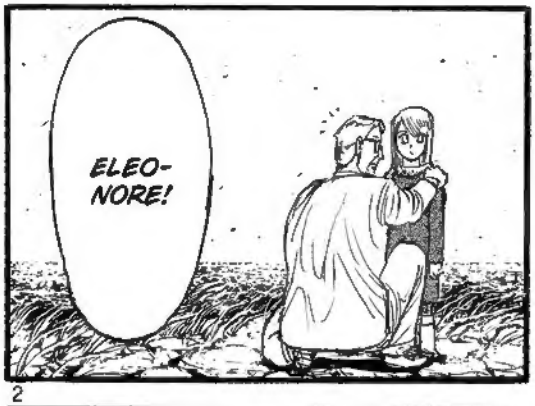

...AREN'T LIKE THIS...
EVEN THE SHIRO-GANES I KNOW...
...HER EYES ARE LIFELESS, AND HER FACIAL EXPRESSION IS NONEXISTENT!
BUT THIS CHILD...
I KNOW THAT THE TRAINING HERE IS VERY STRICT.

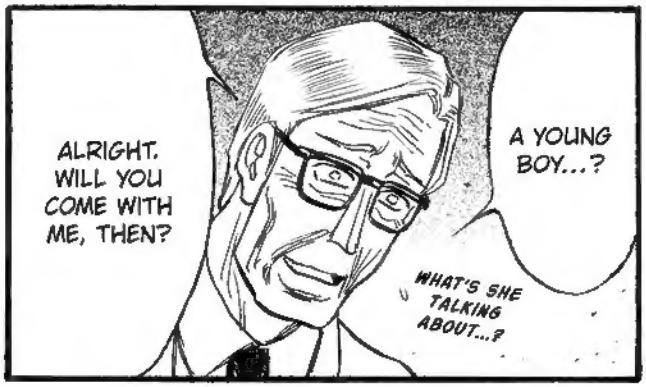
COME WITH ME TO JAPAN!
ELEONORE...

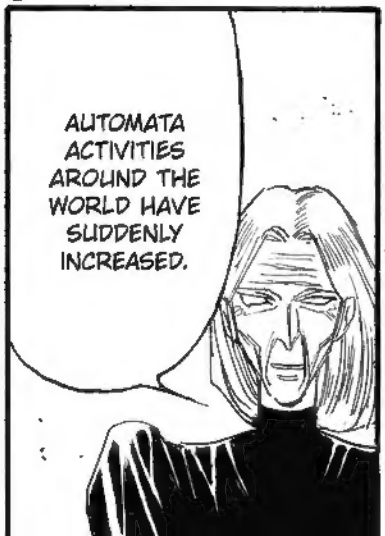

WHO WAS IT? WHO DID THIS TO THIS CHILD?!

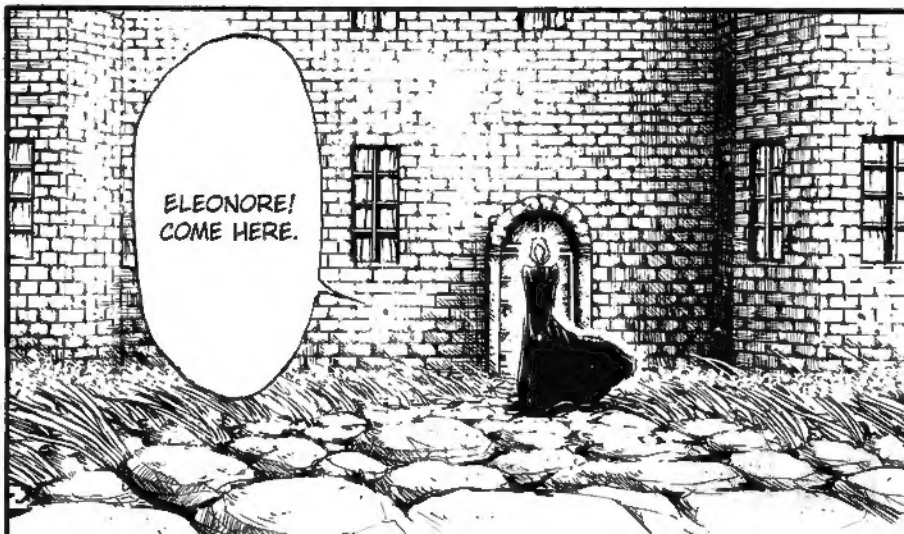

IN JAPAN... I'LL HAVE TO PROTECT A YOUNG BOY...
YES, SIR.

I'LL PROTECT MY DAUGHTER IN JAPAN.
NOW NO ONE ELSE WILL APPROACH HER.


ELEO-NORE!

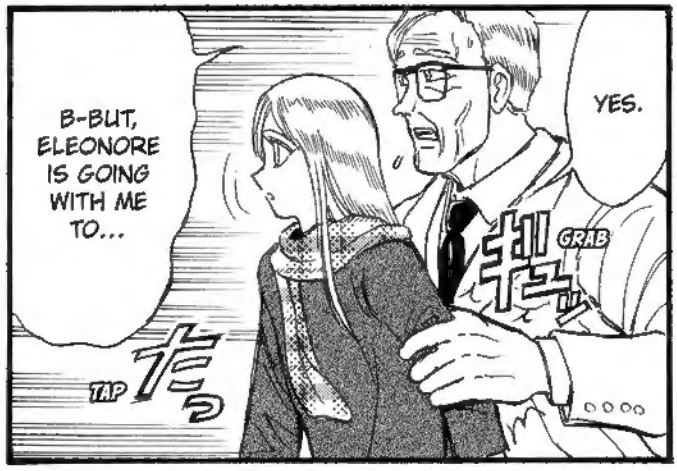

ALRIGHT. WILL YOU COME WITH ME, THEN?
A YOUNG BOY...?
WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT...?

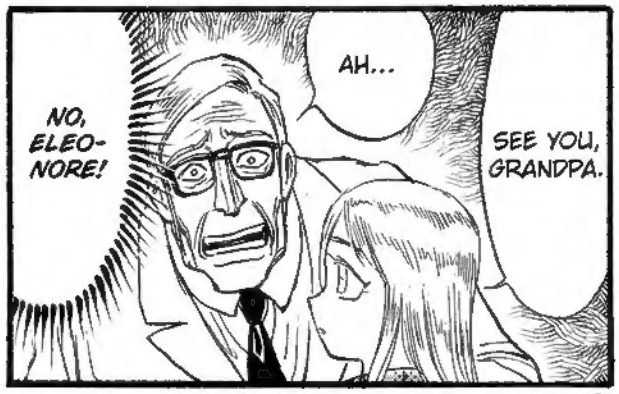

AUTOMATA ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD HAVE SUDDENLY INCREASED.


ELEONORE! COME HERE.

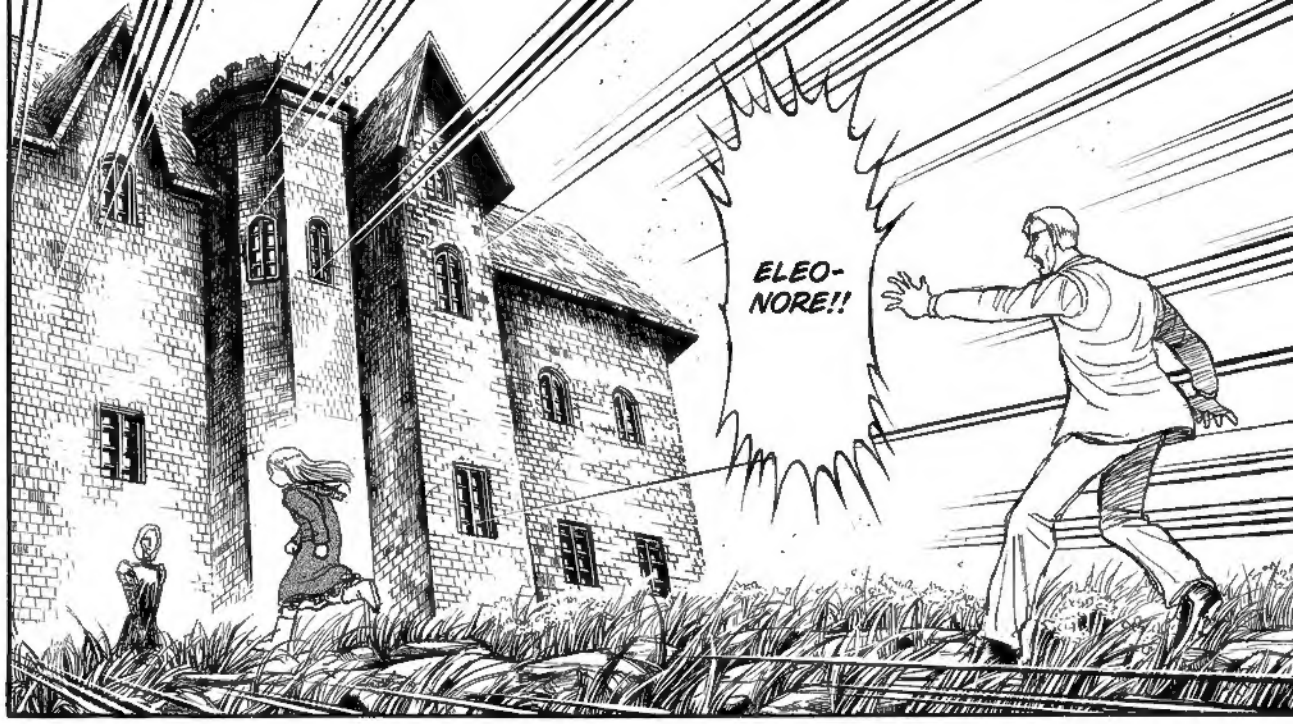
YOU'LL GO TO EASTERN EUROPE, ELEONORE.
WE'LL BE SENDING SHIROGANES ALL OVER THE WORLD TO DEFEAT THEM.

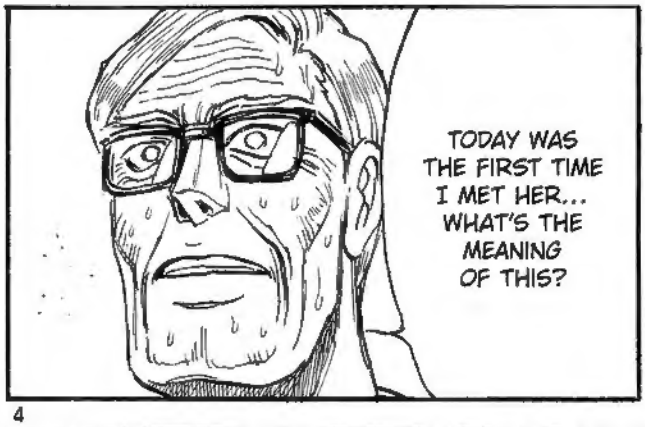
FORGIVE US, MONSIEUR SHOUJI.
SHIROGANES ARE PUPPET DESTROYERS.

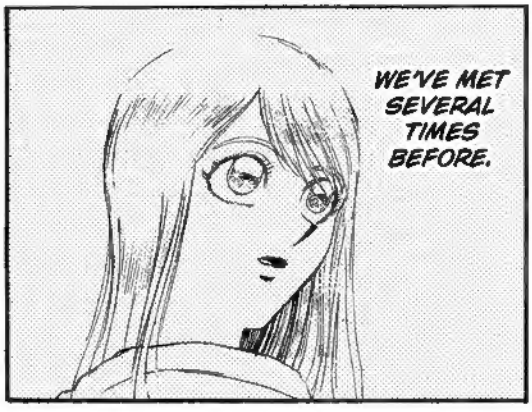

B-BUT, ELEONORE IS GOING WITH ME TO...
YES.
GRAB
TAP


NO, ELEO-NORE!
AH...
SEE YOU, GRANDPA.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LIVE PEACEFULLY WITH ME IN JAPAN...


ELEO-
NORE!!


TODAY WAS THE FIRST TIME I MET HER... WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

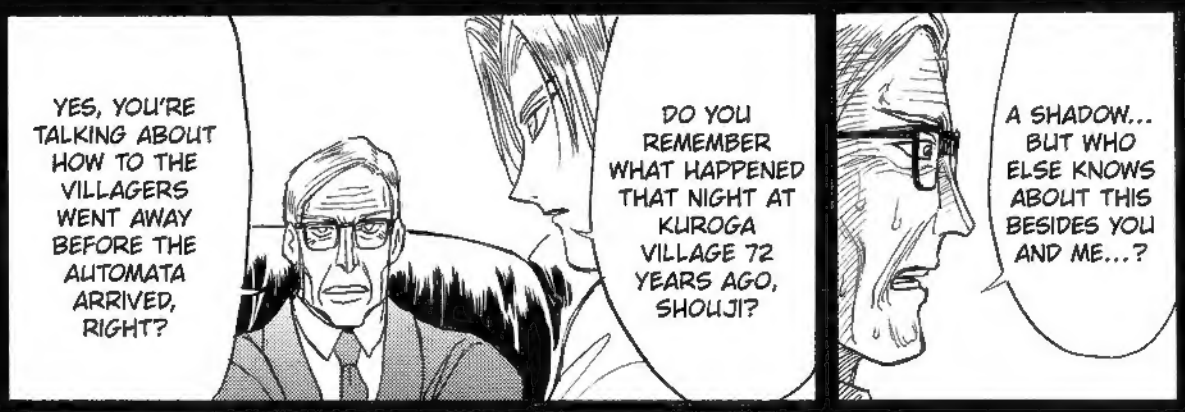

WE'VE MET SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE.

A-ARE YOU SURE?
ODD OF YOU TO ASK THAT.
EVERY TIME YOU WERE HERE, YOU EXPLAINED TO US HOW YOUR MARIONETTES WORKED.

ME? HERE?
...YES, YOU'VE BEEN HERE MANY TIMES BEFORE.

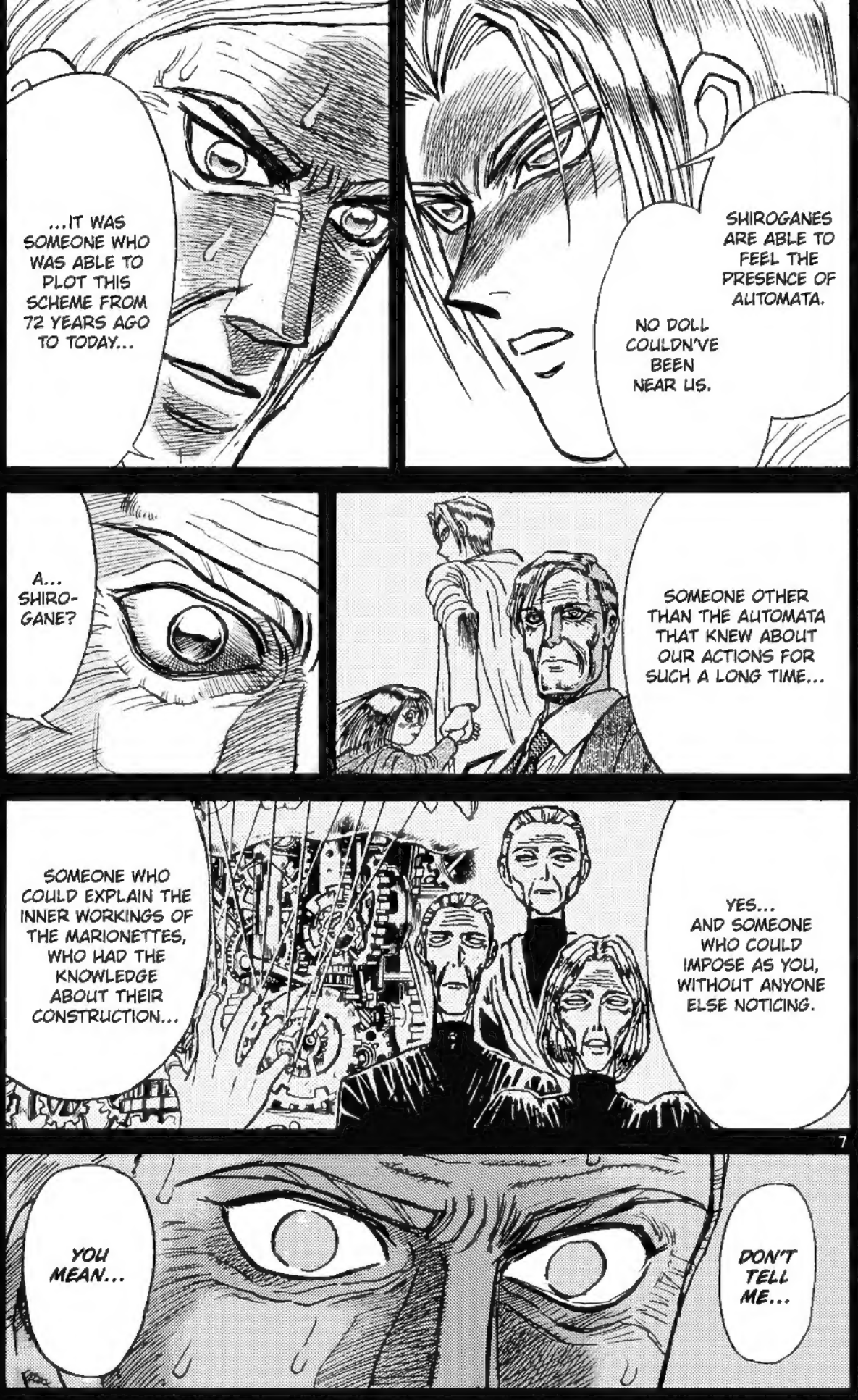
OH... EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING...
W-WHAT IS THIS?!
IS THIS WHAT GUY WAS TALKING ABOUT?!
SHOUJI, YOU'VE NEVER ONCE MET ELEONORE BEFORE...
COR-RECT?
5
SOMEONE CAME HERE...
...PRETENDING TO BE ME!
THEY TRICKED LUCILLE AND THE OTHERS...
...AND MADE ELEONORE THINK SHE WAS A DOLL?!

SHOUJI, THIS MIGHT BE HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT I FEEL THE SHADOW OF SOMEONE ELSE...
THAT SHADOW IS PLOTTING SOMETHING WITH ELEONORE.


DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT AT KUROGA VILLAGE 72 YEARS AGO, SHOUJI?
YES, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT HOW TO THE VILLAGERS WENT AWAY BEFORE THE AUTOMATA ARRIVED, RIGHT?
A SHADOW... BUT WHO ELSE KNOWS ABOUT THIS BESIDES YOU AND ME...?

THAT NIGHT, THE VILLAGERS SAID...
SHOUJI-SAMA'S INVITED US ALL TO THE BEST INN IN TOWN TONIGHT...
...TO TREAT US TO A HUGE FEAST!
HOWEVER, I DON'T RECALL DOING ANY OF THAT...

WHEN I THINK BACK TO THAT MOMENT, I BELIEVE THAT THE SHADOW WAS ALREADY IMPERSONATING YOU THEN...
...BUT WHO? THE AUTO-MATA?
I KNOW YOU ALREADY HAVE A FAINT FEELING OF WHO IT IS, SHOUJI!
.....


...IT WAS SOMEONE WHO WAS ABLE TO PLOT THIS SCHEME FROM 72 YEARS AGO TO TODAY...
NO DOLL COULDN'VE BEEN NEAR US.
SHIROGANES ARE ABLE TO FEEL THE PRESENCE OF AUTOMATA.
A... SHIRO-GANE?
SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE AUTOMATA THAT KNEW ABOUT OUR ACTIONS FOR SUCH A LONG TIME...
SOMEONE WHO COULD EXPLAIN THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE MARIONETTES, WHO HAD THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEIR CONSTRUCTION...
YES... AND SOMEONE WHO COULD IMPOSE AS YOU, WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE NOTICING.
YOU MEAN...
DON'T TELL ME...

SAIGA SADAYOSHI.
THE SHIROGANE DEAN MAISTRE.

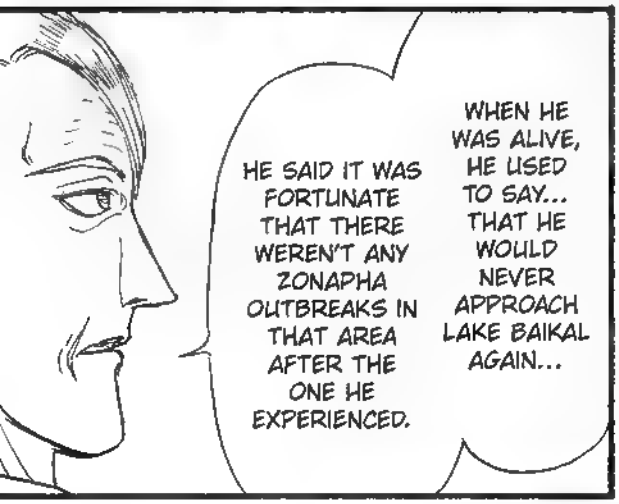
BUT WHY...?
BUT I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE ELSE OTHER THAN HIM...
I DON'T BLAME YOUR FOR NOT WANTING TO BELIEVE IT. HE'S BEEN YOUR CLOSE FRIEND FOR SO LONG.
N-NO, HE WOULDN'T ...
I DON'T KNOW YET... WHICH IS WHY I'M GOING TO RUN AN INVESTIGATION ON HIM.
WHAT DOES HE WANT BY IMPERSONATING ME?!
...KILLED ANGELINA...
...THAT SADA-YOSHI...
I... DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT...

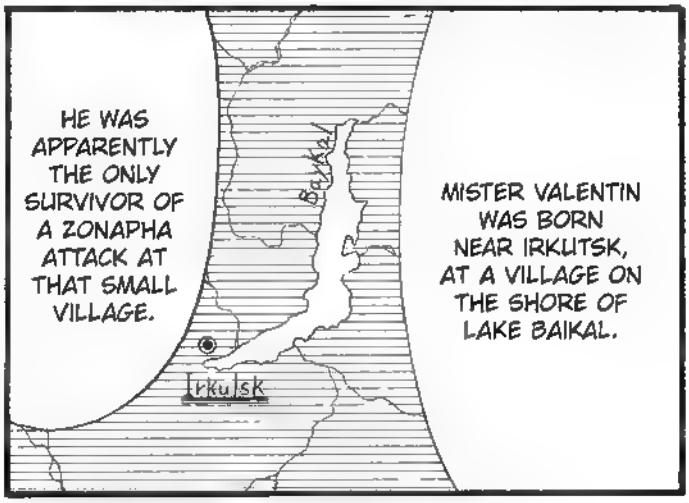
WOOSH
...AND MADE ELEONORE LIKE THAT...

GUY AND SHOUJI STARTED TO INVESTIGATE SADAYOSHI (DEAN).
SHIROGANE (ELEONORE) WENT TO BATTLE IN HUNGARY, AND THEN ROMANIA.
AND THEN, MONTHS FLEW BY.
LUCILLE TOLD ME THAT THE PERSON WHO RECRUITED HIM WAS THE SAME PERSON WHO RECRUITED YOU, RIGHT, ROCKENFIELD?
I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT WHEN HE BECAME A SHIROGANE.
DEAN? YOU MEAN THE ORGAN CORPS' COMMANDER?
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM, GUY?
DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT DEAN FROM HIM?
I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT... IN THE CARIBBEAN.
YES, MISTER VALENTIN... VALENTIN SHARKOV. HE ALREADY PASSED AWAY.
ANYTHING IS FINE... I BELIEVE IT HAPPENED AROUND 1820, NEAR IRKUTSK.
HMM... MISTER VALENTIN RECRUITED HIM WAY BEFORE ME.

THEN... THAT'S STRANGE, GUY.
HUH ...?

THAT'S THE ONLY THING WRITTEN IN THE SHIROGANE RECORDS.
IRKUTSK... THAT CITY CLOSE TO MONGOLIA, ON THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, HUH...

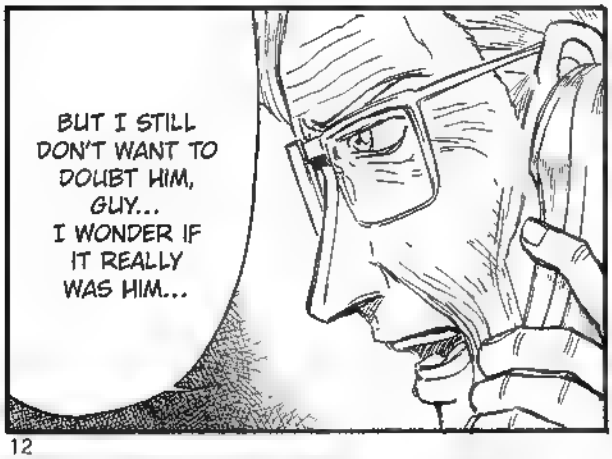

HE SAID IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT THERE WEREN'T ANY ZONAPHA OUTBREAKS IN THAT AREA AFTER THE ONE HE EXPERIENCED.
WHEN HE WAS ALIVE, HE USED TO SAY... THAT HE WOULD NEVER APPROACH LAKE BAIKAL AGAIN...

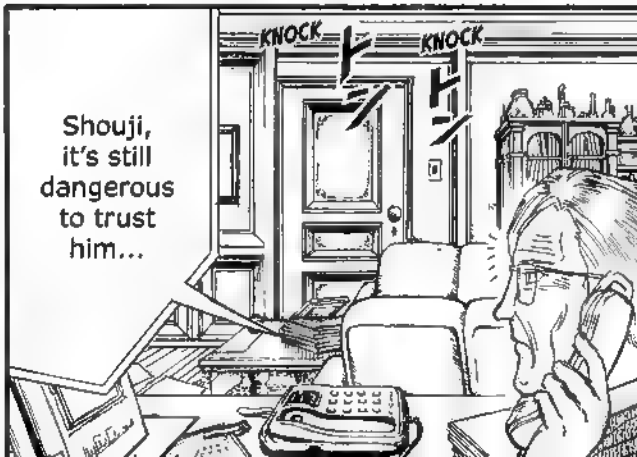

HE WAS APPARENTLY THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF A ZONAPHA ATTACK AT THAT SMALL VILLAGE.
Baikal
Irkutsk
MISTER VALENTIN WAS BORN NEAR IRKUTSK, AT A VILLAGE ON THE SHORE OF LAKE BAIKAL.

YES, IT'S VERY UNLIKELY TO BE THE CASE.
THEN... VALENTIN TURNING DEAN INTO A SHIROGANE IN IRKUTSK...

AND, WHO GAVE HIM AQUA VITAE TO BECOME A SHIROGANE?!
THEN... WHERE DID DEAN CONTRACT ZONAPHA SYNDROME?

SEVEN YEARS PASSED SINCE SHOUJI MET SHIROGANE (ELONORE) AT QUIBERON.





AM I IN THE WAY OF SOMETHING, FATHER?
NOT AT ALL.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, SADA-YOSHI?
...OH, YOU SEE.

13

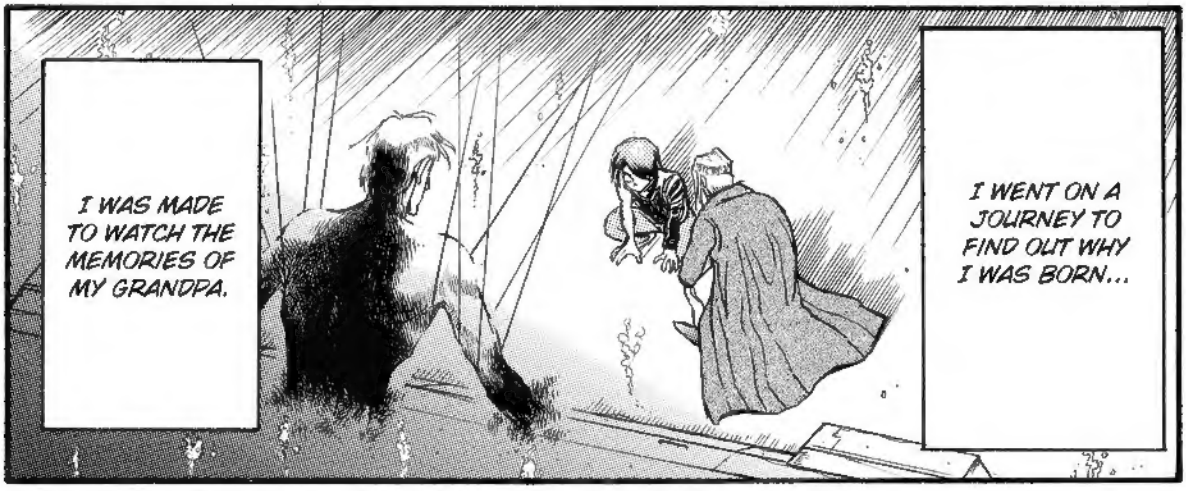
I KNOCKED UP SOME WOMAN I MET OUT THERE.
WHAT ?!
THAT'S... THE FIRST TIME I'M HEARING ABOUT THIS!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I REALLY MESSED UP...
FLUMP

SADA-YOSHI...
NO WAY, I'M ALREADY TOO OLD FOR THAT, YOU KNOW?
AHAHAHA HAHAHAH!
THEN, YOU'RE GOING TO MARRY HER?
BUT MAYBE I'LL PAY HER TO RAISE THE KID.
I'M THINKING ABOUT NAMING HIM "MASARU."

14 Masaru = 勝る (勝 = Victory)

SLAM
バタン
AH, WAIT, SADAYOSHI!
THAT MOMENT, SADAYOSHI SHOWED ME A FACE THAT I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
LOVE TO "WIN" AT EVERYTHING, YOU SEE.
I...

MY NAME IS SAIGA MASARU.
I'M A FIFTH GRADER.

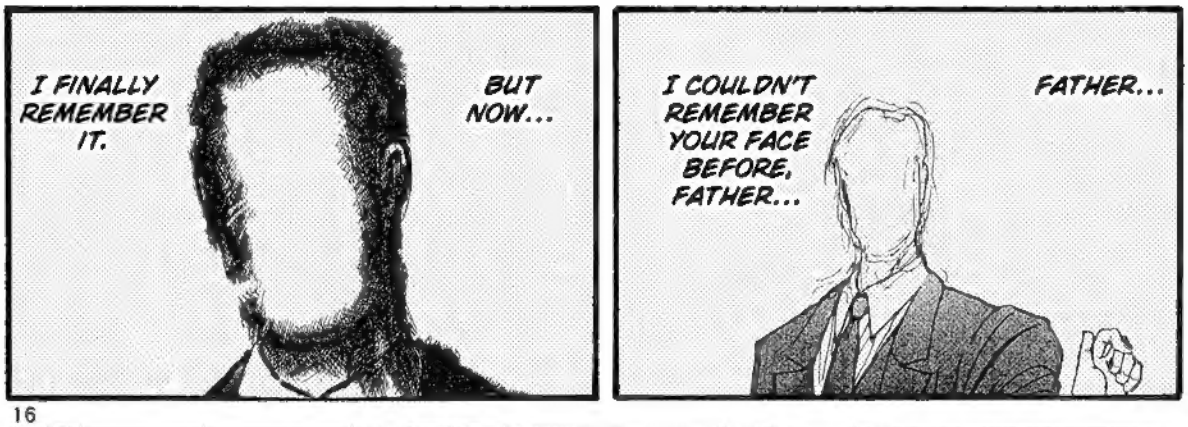

I WAS MADE TO WATCH THE MEMORIES OF MY GRANDPA.
I WENT ON A JOURNEY TO FIND OUT WHY I WAS BORN...

...TO THE "PRESENT" DAY THAT MY FATHER CRAFTED!
THIS LONG "PAST" WAS FINALLY CONNECTED...

WHY DID MY FATHER GIVE HIS INHERENTANCE TO HIS MISTRESS' CHILD? DID HE WANT ME TO DO SOMETHING?

I THOUGHT MY CIRCUMSTANCES HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH MY GRANDPA'S MEMORIES, BUT MY FATHER JUST SHOWED UP.

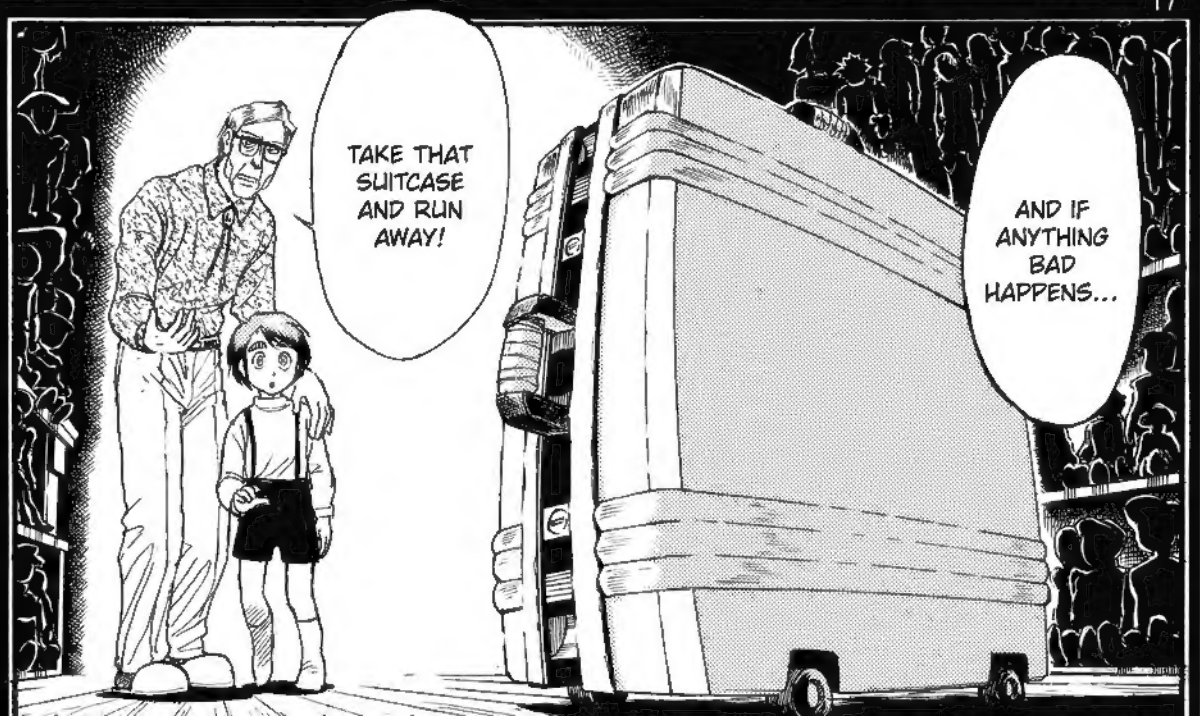
I CAME HERE...
ON THE BEHALF OF YOUR FATHER.


I FINALLY REMEMBER IT.
BUT NOW...
I COULDN'T REMEMBER YOUR FACE BEFORE, FATHER...
FATHER...

16

Father!
SADAYOSHI!

OHH, THERE ARE SO MANY DOLLS, GRANDPA.
ARE YOU SURPRISED? MASARU, ALL THE MEN FROM THE SAIGA FAMILY HAVE A ROOM LIKE THIS.
I DON'T REALLY GET IT, BUT FATHER ALSO TOLD ME...
THAT SOMEDAY IT WILL ALL BE MINE...
THAT'S RIGHT...
YOU'LL FACE MANY HARD-SHIPS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GRANDPA?
MASARU, LISTEN WELL TO WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.
IF YOUR FATHER PASSES AWAY BEFORE YOU BECOME AN ADULT...


AND IF ANYTHING BAD HAPPENS...
TAKE THAT SUITCASE AND RUN AWAY!

1997. THE YEAR GRANDPA FAUGHT WITH MY FATHER.
AND NOW I'M SEEING MY GRANDPA'S MEMORIES AGAIN.
BLAM
PUPPETS 14
SAIGA SADAYOSHI

THIS IS HOW IT ALL STARTED.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU PLAN-NING?!
SADA-YOSHI, WHAT IS THIS PLAN ...?